



IMPACT ANALYSIS OF HATE SPEECHES, MISINFORMATION AND FAKE NEWS ON NATION-BUILDING AS AN INDEX OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract:

This paper examines the impact of hate speeches, fake news and misinformation on nation building. Its objective is to advance knowledge on how the media shaped activities in the society. Most especially, it examines the implication of new media on social integration or cohesion as a significant component of nation-building. It argues that societies are vitally functional based on the media instrumentality through which ideas and information are shared for optimal citizens' responsibilities. Presently, the nationhood status of Nigeria is tense given the increasing insecurity threats, marginalization and economic challenges. This paper is motivated to analyse the impact of hate speeches, fake news and misinformation on nation-building in Nigeria. It adopts documentary methods of data collection. This paper therefore establishes the intrigues of hate speeches as an inciting factor for marginalisation among ethnic groups; unravels the tendencies of fake news on citizens' confusion and apathy; and expose the economic hiccups, sometimes, experienced as a result of misinformation. It concludes that the plurality of new media in Nigeria has significant effect on the threats to nation-building.

Keywords

Media, Hate Speech,
Fake News,
Misinformation,
Nation-building

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Media has a very significant and critical function in teaching and informing the populace in any democracy. The media may encourage civic engagement through promoting causes and disseminating information, expertise, and technology¹. For instance, in Nigeria, it is important to highlight that the media may be used to disseminate awareness of different social welfare and rural development programs as well as the promotion of family planning². The media strongly contributes to raising awareness of the various social ills that exist, such as child marriage, the death of unborn female children, child labor, etc³. The essential significance of media in nation-building is highlighted by the aforementioned instances.

It appears that there is a direct link between media and nation-building. This might be explained by its important contribution to corporate development, societal harmony, policy development, and feedback. In order to educate the public about the democratic process, Onanuga⁴ noted that media organizations host debates and group discussions regarding current political topics. The government and the public are connected through the media. The media has a special responsibility to promote intercommunal cooperation, which will protect the secular foundation of a democratic nation⁵. It also aims to draw attention to problems that violate human rights. Due to media, businesses are now promoted through commercials⁶. The foundational need for the accomplishment of nation-building is an objective and courageous

¹ Kelly Anderson, 'Getting acquainted with social networks and apps: combating fake news on social media', (2018) 35(3), *Libr. Hi Tech News* 1, 6

² Zacheus Okino, "Making Sense of the Threats of Secession." *Premium Times*. Retrieved from newsdiaryonline.com/making-sense-threats-secession-zainab-suleiman-okino/. (Press Council, 2014).

³ Bayo Onanuga, "Roots of hate speech, Remedies". Paper presented at the Workshop on Hate Communication in Nigeria: Identifying Its Roots and Remedies, 22 February. (Abuja: Nigerian Press Council, 2018)

⁴ Ibid

⁵ John Colliander, 'This is fake news': Investigating the role of conformity to other users' views when commenting on and spreading disinformation in social media. (2019) 97, *Comput. Hum. Behav.* 97, 202–215

⁶ Anderson Kurfi, *Whither Nigeria: Unitarism, Federalism, Confederalism or Separatism*, (Kaduna: Network for Justice, 2014).

media⁷. Although it has frequently been labeled as hate speech, fake news, or misinformation, a key controversial problem is the blockage that media information most frequently faces in the communication process. Despite the media's crucial contribution to nation-building efforts, it is important to consider how these media vices can affect Nigeria's efforts to construct its own nation.

Media and the Nigerian society are tartan and plaid in nature with clear intent for social interaction and information dissemination; but, in contemporary discourse, turned to instruments for canvassing, most times, sentimental ideas and propagandas aimed at heating the polity and economic space. Objectively, it has somehow been hijacked by socio-cultural oriented organizations to ventilate their political and partisan thoughts and ethnic interests inside the Nigerian socio-political arena, rather than being a vehicle for individual and communal expressions⁸. Media institutions in Nigeria have emerged as defenders of popular rule and the social conscience of Nigerian society, "...striking fear in the hearts of autocrats and catalyzing regime changes through subtle but vocal and aggressive mobilisation of the populace in such directions, thereby balancing this discourse⁹.

According to Africa leadership forum¹⁰, the exercise of disseminating ideas, speeches and exclusive information to garner influence in the African modern communities were presumably as old as traditional society. The Adversarial naturalist press began in the old british colony called Nigeria in 1914 when imperial government structure was infiltrated from Sierra-Leone. The Anti-colonial crusader from Sierra

⁷ Collins Wang, 'Fake News and Related Concepts: Definitions and Recent Research Development', (2020) 16(3): *Contemporary Management Research*, 16(3): 145-174. doi:10.7903/cmr.20677

⁸ Zindine Khan, (nd.) Role of Mass-Media in Education in India. Link: <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/education/role-of-mass-media-in-education-in-india/45260/>

⁹ Daniel Imhonopi, *The Development and Influence of Mass Media in the Nigerian Society. Peoples and Cultures of Nigeria*. Department of Sociology, (University of Ibadan, Ibadan Press, 2004, p. 1)

¹⁰ Africa leadership forum. African Union Debate on Sustainable Development. (Dakar: CODESRIA Press, 1991)

Leone, such as Richard Blaise visited Nigeria with the clear intention on the establishments of newspaper with a view to mobilizing eminent Nigerians against imperial rule¹¹. Of note, Daily news was the first popular newspaper in Nigeria. It articulated systematically the views and perspectives of Nigerians on most social and political as well as economic issues. It was well-read by the elite people in Lagos and its environs. Naturally, the paper became a major tool in the movement for nationalism in Nigeria. Meanwhile, it was the West African Pilot established in 1937 by Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe that enjoyed mass circulation for promoting objective and logical issues waging against the colonial rule in Nigeria. But nevertheless, the newspaper was later domesticated as the publication platform for the National Council for Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC).

But in the modern era of the Information Revolution, globalization, and liberalization, the invention of the internet and e-mail has reduced the world to the point that it can now be referred to as a "global village." The evolution of global culture is aided by the media¹². However, the media, which frequently gives rise to hate speech, fake news, and disinformation, has two severe problems. First, a cultural revolution is being ushered in by the media, endangering the country's social and cultural purity. The vulgarity used in social, political, and cultural statements, as well as in skits and music videos, is a cause of contention in society. Second, there is a growing propensity, particularly in a young sector of media, to portray minor things in life, the tastes of the wealthy and the overprivileged, and to aggressively promote a consumerist lifestyle that is out of the grasp of the masses. This is a blatant instance of misinformation¹³. Additionally, this occurs at the expense of focusing on the issues, sufferings, and ambitions of the masses. In order to develop a stronger Nigerian country, the fourth estate's function needs to be reconsidered.

In Nigeria, ethnic and socio-cultural integration continue to be goals of nation-building as an index of sustainable development. The assessment

¹¹ Biola Ayansola, *Influence of Mass Media in the Nigerian Society*. (University of Ibadan, Ibadan Press, 2019).

¹² Ven Batispta, *The Press and the Public Good*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

¹³ Daisi Yola, 'Hate Speech in Nigeria: Opportunity in Crisis', (2017) 4(2): *International Journal of Crime, Law and Social Issues*. 28, 35

of the negative effects of media vices brought on by the abundance of social media, however, has received little to no attention¹⁴. It offers an excellent plan for developing a love and commitment for one another and for creating sustainable development by bringing people together. While other nations have employed nation-building and national integration strategies to enhance social integration and further their growth, it becomes concerning. Nigeria, however, falls short. The aim of this paper is to examine the consequential effects of media vices such as hate speech, fake news and misinformation on nation-building in Nigeria. This paper is qualitative utilizing secondary sources. In this paper, there is a critical examination of the emergence of mass media. It discusses hate speeches as an inciting factor for marginalisation among ethnic groups; unravels the tendencies of fake news on citizens' confusion and apathy; and expose the economic hiccups, sometimes, experienced as a result of misinformation. It also goes beyond the literacy barriers; and creates an awareness campaign for education and its significant importance towards the actualization of national growth and development. However, more recently, social media platforms have further enhanced the dissemination of information across strata of the society with elements of fake news, misinformation and hate speeches, thus constituting the fulcrum of the paper. Following this introductory section, the second section of this paper reviews relevant concepts which include fake news, hate speeches, misinformation, new media and nation-building. The third section explains the methods used both in data collection and analysis. The fourth section historicises the emergence of mass media in Nigeria. In the fifth section, this paper analyses the trends in nation-building challenges in Nigeria. The sixth section discusses hate speech and marginalisation tendencies. The seventh section explores fake news and its influx on citizens' confusion and apathy. The eighth section investigates the resultant effects of misinformation on economic instability by questioning whether fake news is bad for the economy. In the ninth section, this paper analyses the new media and its significance to nation-building as an index of sustainable development in Nigeria. The last section provides concluding remarks with host of recommendations.

¹⁴ John Wilson and Roheem Jibrin, 'Mitigating hate speech in Nigeria: The possibilities of artificial intelligence', (2019) 61, *Anàlisi: Quaderns de Comunicació i Cultura*, 17, 30.

2.0 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

This section elucidates the key concepts in this paper. The concepts include fake news, hate speeches, misinformation, new media and nation-building. Concerns about how the increased use of new media can accelerate the spread of false information in society have been expressed in a number of circles.

2.1 Fake News

The term "fake news" refers to false information that is presented as the truth. According to Damstra¹⁵, fake news refers to intentionally false information that is published in the news or on social media. It involves the dissemination of demonstrably misleading information to people¹⁶. It is the deliberate dissemination of incorrect information that can be proven wrong by fact-checking¹⁷. Social networking networks provide quick information sharing with only the press of a single share button¹⁸. Previous researches have looked at the impact of sharing and being exposed to false information¹⁹. According to existing studies, everyone has difficulty spotting false information; this includes users of all ages, genders, and educational levels²⁰. The fight against the spread of misleading information requires literacy and education against fake news²¹. It lists and explores the elements contributing to the circulation

¹⁵ Lass Damstra, *Definitions and Recent Research Development*. (England: Edward Elgar Press, 2021).

¹⁶ Jen Shin, Lam Jian, Ken Driscoll, & Fred Bar, 'The diffusion of misinformation on social media: Temporal pattern, message, and source', (2018) 83, *Comput. Hum. Behav.*, 278–287

¹⁷ Anderson Bondielli & Fischer Marcelloni, 'A survey on fake news and rumour detection techniques', (2019) 497 *Information Science*. 38, 55

¹⁸ Mhadi Aldwairi & Adar Alwahedi, 'Detecting fake news in social media networks', (2018) 141 *Proc. Comput. Sci.* 215, 222

¹⁹ Xhang Chen, S.-C.J Sin, Lee Theng, Chen Lee, 'Why students share misinformation on social media: motivation, gender, and study-level differences', (2015) 41(5), *J. Acad. Librariansh.* 583, 592

²⁰ Haman Kanoh, 'Why do people believe in fake news over the Internet? An understanding from the perspective of existence of the habit of eating and drinking' (2018) 126, *Proc. Comput. Sci.* 1704, 1709; John Colliander, 'This is fake news': Investigating the role of conformity to other users' views when commenting on and spreading disinformation in social media. (2019) 97, *Computer Human Behavior*, 202–215

²¹ Collins Wang, 'Fake News and Related Concepts: Definitions and Recent Research Development', (2020) 16(3): *Contemporary Management Research*, 16(3): 145-174. doi:10.7903/cmr.20677

of false information. The intended effect is to give users the skills to spot and identify misleading information as well as to foster a motivation to stop it from spreading²². Fake news is a new area of study that has attracted considerable interest from both academic and professional mass media sectors²³. The distinction between fake news and other related concepts, such as, advertorial, alternative fact, disinformation, false information, fake information, hoax news, junk news, misinformation, news satire, and post-truth, propaganda news, pseudonews, yellow journalism, is hazy, and the definition of fake news is still unclear²⁴.

2.2 Hate Speech

Recent years have seen a substantial increase in worldwide awareness of hate speech. Its meaning, however, is still up for debate. According to Gagliardone et al.²⁵, there is a complicated relationship between the right to free speech, the rights of individuals, groups, and minorities, as well as concepts like dignity, liberty, and equality, and the idea of hate speech. The term "hate speech" is frequently seen to co-exist or become mixed with other terms such as "offensive," "profane," and "abusive languages," as well as "cyberbullying," according to Zhang et al's observation²⁶ that there has been an increasing amount of research on hate speech detection as well as other related areas. This study defined hate speech as targeting persons or groups based on their traits with the evident aim to provoke, injure, or promote hatred and may or may not employ offensive or profane phrases in order to distinguish it from other forms of expression. Any online or offline communication that "expresses hatred for some group, in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other distinguishing features of

²² Den Batispta, *The Press and the Public Good*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)

²³ Peter Dickson, A Divided Nigeria, Ethnicity and Power. Retrieved from saharareporters.com/2011/08/25/divided-nigeria-ethnicity-and-power, 2011.

²⁴ Celliers de Beer, 'An overview of online fake news: characterization, detection, and discussion,' (2021) 57(2), *Information Processing Management*, 20, 25

²⁵ Isak Gagliardone, Davies Gal, Tobinon Alves, & Gary Martinez, *Countering Online Hate Speech*. (Paris: UNESCO, 2015).

²⁶ Zikker Zhang, David Robinson, & Joseph Tepper, "Detecting hate speech on Twitter using a convolution-GRU based deep neural network". In: A. GANGEMI et al. (eds.). *The Semantic Web. ESWC 2018 Satellite Events. 15th Extended Semantic Web Conference Heraklion, Crete, Greece, 3-7 June 2018*. Cham: Springer, 745-760.

mankind" is considered hate speech²⁷. It is also described as a word combining actual dangers to the security of persons or organizations with situations in which people may just be venting their ire at authorities²⁸. Hate speech is any communication made through text, visuals, or sound that targets specific people or groups with demeaning or dehumanizing language or material with the intent to reduce and dehumanize them²⁹. Usually, this type of speech leads to violence. The most extreme types of hate speech, according to Hopko³⁰, are direct threats made to specific persons or groups. For instance, doxing occurs when someone publishes personal information with the intention of putting another person in danger or drawing unwelcome attention. Hate speech (es) implies "hate" in all of its manifestations. Hatred may be directed towards a particular country, ethnic group, outcast group, or individual, especially among politicians.

2.3 Misinformation

One of the many words and ideas used to describe incorrect, inaccurate, or partially truthful information is "misinformation." The idea of hate speech and misinformation appears to have interfering aspects of disinformation³¹. Whether or not it's meant to mislead or deceive individuals, misleading information is referred to as misinformation³². Contrarily, disinformation is a term used to describe erroneous information that is disseminated with the express purpose of confusing or deceiving people. The phrases are occasionally used interchangeably

²⁷ Bayo Onanuga, "Roots of hate speech, Remedies". Paper presented at the Workshop on Hate Communication in Nigeria: Identifying Its Roots and Remedies, 22 February. (Abuja: Nigerian Press Council, 2018)

²⁸ Isak Gagliardone, Davies Gal, Tobinson Alves, & Gary Martinez, *Countering Online Hate Speech*. (Paris: UNESCO, 2015).

²⁹ James Waldron, *The harm in hate speech*. (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2012).

³⁰ Andrew Hopko, "Can artificial intelligence recognize hate speech? Cal-Berkeley researchers think so". Cronkite (2018) News, 9 August [Online]

³¹ Lass Damstra, Definitions and Recent Research Development. (England: Eward Elgar Press, 2021).

³² Abraham Ezeibe, Nigeria's disinformation landscape. 2017 Retrieved from <https://items.ssrc.org/disinformation-democracy-and-conflict-prevention/nigerias-disinformationlandscape/>

because of how similar they are³³. While all false information is also false, not all false information is disinformation. Disinformation always indicates that the misleading information is being supplied or propagated on purpose³⁴. Disinformation is especially employed in the context of widespread deceit, such as when a government launches a campaign to spread false information to the citizens of another nation³⁵. Misinformation may be disseminated with the intention of deceiving people or simply because someone mistakenly believes it to be true. The contrast between their verb forms, misinform and disinform, demonstrates this divergence as well³⁶. Giving someone purposely false information is known as misleading them. Simply said, inaccurate or deceptive information can nonetheless have an impact on how people behave in an economy.

2.4 New Media

Simply said, new media refers to social media networks that are effectively run through internet services³⁷. Online communication through new media can lower the time and geographical barriers to contact³⁸. Both electronic and technical media are considered new media. Compared to the traditional media, which includes radio, television, newspapers, and magazines, it is distinct³⁹. However, the electronic and technical media are in fact the most effective means of influencing how people and nations view every important domestic and worldwide problem. The standard of national discourse and priorities is reflected in

³³ Bello Ali, 'The current state of fake news: challenges and opportunities', (2022) 121, *Processing Computer Science*, 817, 825

³⁴ James Waldron, *The harm in hate speech*. (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2012); Bayo Onanuga, "Roots of hate speech, Remedies". Paper presented at the Workshop on Hate Communication in Nigeria: Identifying Its Roots and Remedies, 22 February. (Abuja: Nigerian Press Council, 2018)

³⁵ Cisse Atodiressei, Andre Tănăselea, & Bardar Iftene, 'Identifying fake news and fake users on Twitter', (2018) 126, *Processing Computer Science* 451–461

³⁶ North Rochlin, 'Fake news: belief in post-truth', (2017) 35(3), *Library Hi Tech*, 386, 392

³⁷ Lilian Dash, "Understanding hate speech". In: C. Möller, A. Amouroux (eds.). *The Media Freedom Internet Cookbook*. (Vienna: OSCE, 2009: 125-160)

³⁸ John Wilson and Roheem Jibrin, 'Mitigating hate speech in Nigeria: The possibilities of artificial intelligence', (2019) 61, *Anàlisi: Quaderns de Comunicació i Cultura*, 17, 30.

³⁹ Gilbert Gravanis, Akham Vakali, Kirsh Diamantaras, Pier Karadais, 'Behind the cues: a benchmarking study for fake news detection', (2019) 128, *Expert System Appliaance*, 201, 213

the new media. The new media allows for a serious evaluation of the media's form and content, which may be used to assess a country's moral, intellectual, and social standards. This essay follows Nnamuo and Nwafor's definition⁴⁰ of new media, which includes all Internet-based platforms that emerged along with new information and communication technology. They identified a variety of new media platforms, including as blogs, mobile/cell phones, wikis, webcasts, online newspapers, video streaming, and social networking sites like Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, 2go, and WeChat, among others.

2.5 Nation-Building as an Index of Sustainable Development

The process through which the borders of the contemporary state and the national community converge might be referred to as nation-building. National integration is the intended result⁴¹. The main disagreement in the literature is on the causes of national integration⁴². Therefore, it has been suggested that constructing a country is a structural process connected to urbanization, industrialization, social mobilization, etc. Better said, nation-building is one of the most powerful philosophies of our time. An ethnic group is not motivated by nationalist ideology, which holds that the world is divided into national units (or "nation-states") and that loyalty should be primarily to the nation rather than to the family, the kinship group, or some other local or supranational unit, along with a claim to sovereignty over a homeland with a defined territorial boundary⁴³. The process of creating a national identity via the use of governmental authority is known as nation-building⁴⁴. Nation-building is basically about bringing the people of the

⁴⁰ Ansar Nnamuo & Uche Nwafor, Convergence of traditional and new media of communication (pp.56-66). Retrieved September 22, 2019 from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333616547/_convergence-of-traditional-andnew-media-of-communication

⁴¹ Haez Mylonas, Nation-building, (2020) <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199743292/obo-9780199743292-0217.xml>

⁴² Kelvin Maier, *This House has Fallen: Nigeria in Crisis*. London: Penguin Books. Mainasara, A. 1982. *The Five Majors-Why They Struck*. (Suffolk: Richard Clay, 2000)

⁴³ Utomi, J. M. (2018). "The controversial hate speech bill". *The Sun News*, 8 March [Online].

⁴⁴ Sunday Starr, "Understanding hate speech". In: C. Möller, A. Amouroux (eds.). *The Media Freedom Internet Cookbook*. (Vienna: OSCE, 125-160, 2004).

state together so that it can stay long-term politically stable and sustainable. Mylonas⁴⁵ claimed that legitimate power in contemporary national governments is related to majority rule and popular sovereignty. These majorities are created via the process of nation-building. Nation-building in the modern era referred to newly independent countries' initiatives to construct reputable national government institutions, among other agencies⁴⁶. Nation-building is essentially an effort to reshape the population of areas that have been colonized by empires or forces without respect for racial, religious, or other distinctions.

2.6 The Emergence of Mass Media in Nigeria

The origin of mass media began in 1914 shortly after annexation of Lagos colony with the two protectorates. This is not without a traceable rope to the Anti-colonial crusades of Sierra Leoneans. One of the prominent Sierra Leoneans is Richard Blaise who initiated newspapers as platform for mobilizing the people against colonial rule in Nigeria among other British colonies in West Africa. In 1922, Herbert Macaulay established first indigenous newspaper called Daily News. It was regarded as the first truly Nigerian popular newspaper⁴⁷. It articulated the contentious position of Nigerians on variety of political and social economic issues; and was largely read by few minorities among residents in Lagos and its environments.

Naturally, the newspaper was idealized a platform for nationalist crusade. Although it has limited coverage, except in the Lagos colony. However, the establishment of West African Pilot in 1937 was targeted at ensuring mass circulation, sharing a similar motive of promoting broad-based anti-colonial crusade. The West African Pilot was founded by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe. It then became the popular indigenous newspaper with nationalistic scope, while it was later politically hijacked

⁴⁵ Haez Mylonas, Nation-building, (2020) <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199743292/obo-9780199743292-0217.xml>

⁴⁶ Okeke, and others, Hate speech in social media: An exploration of the problem and its proposed solutions, PhD thesis, (University of Colorado at Boulder, 2022).

⁴⁷ Ibid

by the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC)⁴⁸. Also, the Nigerian Tribune has a relative trajectory, but with a little caveat for championing the cause and welfaristic doctrine of the Egbe-Omo Oduduwa and the Action Group. However, the reportage style of the leading newspapers reflected some attributes of fake news due to their ethnocentric preferences. Moreover, the Nigerian citizens began to engage in the emergence of New Nigerian in 1940 using the apparatus of newspaper for the promotion of interests. Earlier in 1930s, Vernacular newspaper was developed by the Colonial Development Corporation, which later served as Hausa-Emergence of the Punch newspaper in the 1970s. There was an intrigue in its formation to destabilize the role of the adversarial newspapers⁴⁹. Also, prior to the electronic forms of mass media, there were also the news magazines and the soft-sell magazines. These were regarded as an objective-based journalism which extensively relied upon investigation into socio-economic and political issues before and post-independence. Examples of these newspapers and magazines were: the Afriscope, New breed, and New watch etc. Their contents covered a broad range of societal issues far beyond the news reportage⁵⁰. It is upon this formation that other contemporary newspapers and re-direction to the electronic form subsists. It should be noted that much attention has not been paid to the deep interrogation of hate speech, fake news and misinformation within the Nigerian context. Thus, the following sections present.

3.0 GAPS IN EXISTING LAWS/POLICIES CONCERNING INTEGRATI NG SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 Trends in Nation-Building Challenges in Nigeria

This section adopted and reviewed an excerpt from Yola (2017) in an article titled: Hate speeches in Nigeria: Opportunity in Crisis. The current state of Nigeria is consistent with important remark that while ethnicity, language, and shared religious beliefs influence nationalist

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Davis Domke & Veron Shah, 'Media Priming Effects: Accessibility, Association, and Activation', (1998) 10 *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 51-74

politics, they can cause disputes within the same nation⁵¹. The difficulties of creating a unified nation from the assortment of 400 ethnic and linguistic groups professing Islam, Christianity, and traditional fetishism that colonial Britain constituted into a single colonial territory through piecemeal amalgamation of over 54 years are frequently discussed in commentaries of Nigeria's historical trajectory⁵².

Ojiako⁵³ focus on the difficulties of finding ways to unite and form a nation out of the three main ethnic groups (Hausas in the North, Ibos in the East, and Yorubas in the West), which differ in race and language as well as in social and political organizations, as the root of Nigeria's political problems. According to Ojiako⁵⁴, ethnic and religious biases, the lack of a unified national identity, and the absence of a unifying ideology are to blame for the negative perceptions of Nigeria that include turmoil and uncertainty, military coups, repression, drug trafficking, and corporate fraud.

Kasfelt⁵⁵ links the development of constitutional regionalism and regionally based political parties in the 1950s to the historical roots of the numerous violent and bloody clashes between religious groups, particularly between Christians and Muslims, which rip Nigeria apart along religious lines. He asserts that "ethnic, religious, and regional loyalty have been important and defining factors in Nigerian politics ever since." According to Dickson⁵⁶, ethnic conflict is still a significant barrier to the establishment of the Nigerian state and continues to stalk and haunt it. He asserts that "the conflict spiral generated by ethnicity can be seen at all crucial phases of Nigeria's development, including its democracy, the party system, the electoral process, and the sharing of the national cake through office appointments and resource allocation. It began with the transition from colonial to neo-colonial dependence,

⁵¹ Anderson Heywood, *Politics* (Third ed. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan)

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Okonkwo Ojiako, *Nigeria: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. (Onitsha: African Educational Publishers, 1981)

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ Fatty Kasfelt, *Feeding Frenzy: How Attack Journalism has Transformed America Politics* (Cheltenham, U.K: Eward Elgar, 1994).

⁵⁶ Peter Dickson, A Divided Nigeria, Ethnicity and Power. Retrieved from saharareporters.com/2011/08/25/divided-nigeria-ethnicity-and-power, 2011.

military misrule, and the 13 years of PDP brand democracy. Dickson⁵⁷ notes further that despite the desire for some form of true federalism or on the extreme confederacy, resource control, and largely self-determination, the complexity of ethnicity in Nigeria could only be fully understood in the context of power struggles among various ruling class factions as well as within the context of lower class ignorance through manipulation.

Because of the fluid and dynamic character of changing interests, which are primarily driven by a tight North/South and Christian/Muslim division, ethnicity has been continually evolving. Kurfi⁵⁸ recalls that successive Nigerian constitutions were altered to reflect real federalism and provide component states more administrative, budgetary, and resource power in order to prevent the country from dissolving into separate states. Nigerian leaders negotiated for a federal constitution based on a parliamentary system of government from 1951 to 1960, but Nigeria's unique issues and complex political forces effectively rendered the parliamentary system meaningless and propelled the nation into a civil war that was fought from 1969 to 1971 with resentment and vengeance. Since then, political elites have promoted "nebulous" ideas like the "rotational presidency," which treats all geopolitical zones equally regardless of their size, population, or geography, undermining democratic norms that guarantee that the minority must have a voice in administration⁵⁹. Additionally, the term "Resource Control" was adopted, emphasizing the distribution of income based on natural resources, particularly oil generated from certain regions.

The search for a different form of governance to address Nigeria's issues led to the establishment of the country's Executive Presidential administration, which only lasted from 1979 to 1983 until a protracted military dictatorship regime took over until 1999. Nigeria has seen an increase in agitations, claims and denials, hate speech, name-calling, and encouragement to violence since Buhari was elected president in May 2015. Except for the events leading up to the civil war and the riots that

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ Anderson Kurfi, *Whither Nigeria: Unitarism, Federalism, Confederalism or Separatism*, (Kaduna: Network for Justice, 2014).

⁵⁹ Ibid

followed the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election, Okino⁶⁰, who views hate speech as a crime against humanity and not protected by the First Amendment, notes that Nigeria has been brought dangerously close to collapse by Nnamdi Kanu's Biafran agitations and the orchestrated quit notice on the Ndigbo by the Arewa Youth Coalition. Kanu is infamous for using vulgar language to intimidate Northerners, Hausa Fulani, and Yorubas. The recent appeal for the self-emancipation of Yoruba Nations by Sunday Adeyemo (Igboho), skillfully handled by Prof. Banji Akintoye among others, illustrates a similar tendency. With this trend, nation-building in Nigeria is at the boiling point.

Biafran rhetoric is categorized by Igbokwe⁶¹ as a centrifugal tendency that has sparked the emergence of ethnic, regional, and communal politics. He points out that after Buhari's victory in the 2015 presidential elections, a sizable majority of people from the South-South and South East have flocked to the President, spewing insults, calling him names, disparaging his person and his lofty position, and spreading hate and ethnic divides. Every decision the president makes to rebuild and reposition the nation is criticized, denigrated, and given racial connotations. Different responses are sparked throughout Nigeria by the Ndigbo's insistence on restructuring equitably. The word conjures up regional administrations with a framework of 12 federating units and 54 states as fundamental centers of growth in the minds of Middle Belt and Northern minority. This group suggests a three-tiered federating system with elected governors for the states and a governor general for each of the 12 regions. State governments should continue to be in charge of local governments⁶².

⁶⁰ Zacheus Okino, "Making Sense of the Threats of Secession." Premium Times. Retrieved from newsdiaryonline.com/making-sense-threats-secession-zainab-suleiman-okino/. (Press Council, 2014).

⁶¹ Joe Igbokwe, Igbo Ethnic Bigotry Worries Me. Retrieved from saharareporters.com/2016/07/11/igbo-ethnic-bigotry-and-hate-campaigns-worry-me-joe-igbokwe.

⁶² Moses Oloja, "Whose hate speech threatens national unity?". The Guardian, (2018) 22 July [Online]

4.0 LEGAL APPROACHES FOR ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

Constructively, hate speech, slogan or expression is a connotation of denigration of an individual, group or organisation on the basis of uproar or disagreement among individuals in the social group. The attributes of social group were identified to include: such as age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, physical and mental disability, among others. A common hate speech is an indictment from statements of slurs and epithets as well as general statements that inflict any form of malicious stereotypes⁶³. It could also be defined as any form of speech that incites violence against another group. In recent times, the advent of on-line media has expanded the frontier of generation of hate speech among trending online platforms.

Critics of hate speech, Adile⁶⁴ and Coler⁶⁵, argued not only that it brings about psychological disorders or sometimes physical harms to its victims, but also berates the intimacy and expected standard of equality which should subsist among individuals. That is especially true, because they argued that social groups remain the common targets of hate speech. It was significant meant to suffer social disintegration, oppression and marginalization. Hate speech thus facades a major challenge for the democratization of modern liberal societies. It sometimes poses commitment threats to expression, freedom right, justice and social equality. Hence, there is a current debate in those societies, especially in Nigeria over the modalities for the regulations of hate speech. This was also recently amplified due to the outbreak of #EndSARS protests which was claimed to be influenced by misinformation and fake news.

The traditional liberal view about hate speech is not to allow its dodge under the conveyance of freedom of expression. However, this does not mean that the freedom should be turned to as instrument of denigration

⁶³ Haman Kanoh, 'Why do people believe in fake news over the Internet? An understanding from the perspective of existence of the habit of eating and drinking' (2018) 126, *Proc. Comput. Sci.* 1704, 1709

⁶⁴ Jacob Adile, 'Democracy and Its Discontents', (2012) 9(2), *African Renaissance*, 7, 14

⁶⁵ Sholley Coler, 'Will a Crisis in Journalism Provoke a Crisis in Democracy?' (2005) 73, *The Political Quarterly* :400-408.

and destabilization⁶⁶. Although it was argued that regulatory position acknowledges what the odious nature of the messages of hate speech could possibly cost nation-states. The reality of this position conformed with the damages and vandalisation of public properties in Lagos among other States in Nigeria. It was, as a result, maintained that “state censorship is a cure that causes more harm than the disease of bigoted expression”⁶⁷. Nelson and Taneja⁶⁸ noted that a state censorship might lead to the suppression of possibly true and unpopular. But it nevertheless upholds the legitimate expression. Perhaps, it suppresses even the criticism of government. This is not just vital, but a driving force to the political health and development of liberal democracy. However, it was recommended that the best subtle way to defy hate speech is to make known its falsity in the public space of ideas.

On the issue of marginal tendencies, the irony is that individuals, groups and organizations, who usually complain of spreading against them or being insulted by other ethnic groups, more often use more retaliatory and hateful words in responding the groups who have insulted them. To this end, there is at least a net effect of widening the social distance and exacerbating crisis among the expectedly peaceful groups constituting the country⁶⁹. There is a notable hike in the number of incidents in Nigeria. The hatred could either be in form of oral or verbal expression across communities in Nigeria. The re-occurrence often uprooted long time conflict which is making further division and unsafe for peaceful co-habitation. Although not much attention was paid to its frivolity at inception, it was merely regarded to as political propaganda⁷⁰. However, utterance of free speech could most times be a good idea, but in real

⁶⁶ Jones Buschman, ‘Good news, bad news, and fake news: going beyond political literacy to democracy and libraries’, (2019) 75(1), *Journal of Document*, 213–228

⁶⁷ Sholley Coler, ‘Will a Crisis in Journalism Provoke a Crisis in Democracy?’ (2005) 73, *The Political Quarterly* :400–408.

⁶⁸ Mice Nelson & Antel Taneja, *News Influence on Our Pictures of the World*. In: Bryant J. Zillmann D (eds) *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, (2nd edition. Lawrence, 2018).

⁶⁹ Miller Defleur, *Milestones in Mass Communication Research: Media Effects*. (Third Edition. New York: Longman, 1995).

⁷⁰ Daniel Agbese, The dangers of fake news. Daily Trust. Retrieved January 25, 2019 from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/the-dangers-of-fake-news.html>

terms, any society that allows free utterance of speech which may likely threaten social safety is not a free society⁷¹.

Claims of marginalization and demands for restructuring by Ndigbo are a ruse. Restructuring is a game to people in the South East anytime elections are expected⁷². According to the South-South, it is resource management and report implementation from the 2014 National Conference. The secessionist idea of restructuring, in his view, has no place within existing constitutional stipulations and legal requirements, even though restructuring the functions of governmental institutions, readjusting organs of state, or redistributing powers between states and the federal government could be accommodated within existing constitutional order. Paul Unongo⁷³ likewise dismisses the need for restructuring by Ndigbo as simply political rhetoric. "Nnamdi Kanu believes that restructuring entails secession and the revival of Biafra. Some see it as fiscal federalism that gives the states autonomy over their resources. While for some it means independent regional powers for the six geopolitical zones, others want the presidential system to be replaced by regionalism and the parliamentary system. Before military involvement, Nigeria had regional administrations and a parliamentary system. "Some individuals only want to reform government to stop northern hegemony," he claimed. In order to impose another area of the country, the first coup "eliminated northern dominance from power, politics, and governance by targeted executions and the eradication of leadership from certain region of the country."

A major disadvantage of hate speech in social environment is the hardship and suffering posed on the populace within the system. It is however so incomprehensible that people are at the inflicting end⁷⁴. Moreover, hate speech is simply antithetical to the solution of the social challenges. Nevertheless, all constituents of the social environments stand guilty in one way or the other for their failure to lift up to civic

⁷¹ Mice Nelson & Antel Taneja, *News Influence on Our Pictures of the World*. In: Bryant J. Zillmann D (eds) *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, (2nd edition. Lawrence, 2018).

⁷² Daniel Agbese, The dangers of fake news. Daily Trust. Retrieved January 25, 2019 from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/the-dangers-of-fake-news.html>

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ North Rochlin, 'Fake news: belief in post-truth', (2017) 35(3), *Library Hi Tech*, 386, 392

responsibilities and the outward decay within the system⁷⁵. In spite of this notion, it becomes despondent that the wind of hate speech, mostly orchestrated by social stereotypes; has become continuously unabated across the length and breadth of the country. Safi⁷⁶ maintained that the surge in spreading of hate speech before and after the 2015 general elections was but not limited to words. Local inciting slogans were used against political personalities and dynasties. A good example was the case of former Governor and Senate Preseident, Bukola Saraki of Kwara State and Nigeria respectively. ‘O to ge’ was a local slogan meaning ‘enough is enough’ for Saraki’s domineering in the political space and for continuous running for political offices. The slogan depicts a somewhat hatred for Saraki’s personality, his groups and political party.

Regrettably, the debate about hate speech is no longer twisted because both major and minor groups concurrently get access to the various kinds of media platforms that enable them to widely broadcast the inciting messages on hatred, violence and disillusionments⁷⁷. From the foregoing, hate speech is a complex problem with all indication among the ever-increasing number of youths, as well as multiple online platforms for the activities⁷⁸. This underlines the recent clamour for the regulations of social media platforms, especially against the spread of hate speech and fake news which are gadgets of misinformation. Defleur⁷⁹ had earlier opined that judiciary has the capability of constructively cross-checking evidence and applying necessary measures to ensure strict guide against hate speech or any form of offensive speech. Paul⁸⁰ thus

⁷⁵ Abraham Ezeibe, Nigeria’s disinformation landscape. 2017 Retrieved from <https://items.ssrc.org/disinformation-democracy-and-conflict-prevention/nigerias-disinformationlandscape/>; Celliers de Beer, ‘An overview of online fake news: characterization, detection, and discussion,’ (2021) 57(2), *Information Processing Management*, 20, 25

⁷⁶ Wallace Safi, ‘An Approach to News Discourse’, (2018) 10, *Political Communication*, 55, 75.

⁷⁷ Daisi Yola, ‘Hate Speech in Nigeria: Opportunity in Crisis’, (2017) 4(2): *International Journal of Crime, Law and Social Issues*. 28, 35

⁷⁸ Kazeem Lamidi, ‘An Examination of the Key Components of NYSC Community Development Service in Southwestern Nigeria (1999-2014)’, (2017) 6(3), *International Journal of Community Research*, 93-101.

⁷⁹ Miller Defleur, *Milestones in Mass Communication Research: Media Effects*, (Third Edition. New York: Longman, 1995).

⁸⁰ Samuel Paul *Explorations in Communication and History*. (Barbiezelizer: Routledge Press, 2008).

recommended that to tackle hate speech significantly requires collaborative measures from individuals with diverse perspectives on its causal factors, effects and outcomes.

Hate speech is observed as an emotive concept with no generally acceptable definition within the spectrum of human rights law⁸¹. It could be acclaimed that hate speech would not have appropriately defined; but it can be cautiously identified whenever it is expressed or spread. Also, the identifying elements differ from the content and context of a hate speech to another. Hence, its characteristic features are more often contradictory or elusive. Meanwhile, hate speech involves more dynamic of indicating that an entity seems unpleasant to another for self-driven reasons⁸². It is quite different from mere ridiculing or teasing individual, group or organization. It is also far from an act of shouting or hauling an ugly word in order to frustrate the opposing groups.

Particularly in Nigeria, hate speech is people's conjecture either verbal or non-verbal against specific social distinguishing individuals, groups and organisation. The hate messages are typically and dimensionally directed among people who share conflicting interests on any of the socio-cultural, political, economic issues⁸³. Most times, the constructs of hate speech are conditionally chosen; but often because they are seen as their rivalry groups. Literally, the messages of hatred are constructed to harm or otherwise degrade or the set targets for somewhat unpleasant reasons⁸⁴. A common feature of hate speech content is that it is always antagonistic, critically constructed to depict abusive meaning against an entity. For instance, Fog⁸⁵ noted that "jokes cracking about people's ethnicity, sexuality, religion, skin colour among other aspects have the capacity to inducing negative aspects, which is one of the components of hate speech." It also reinforces biases, prejudices and stereotypes, which

⁸¹ John Wilson and Roheem Jibrin, 'Mitigating hate speech in Nigeria: The possibilities of artificial intelligence', (2019) 61, *Anàlisi: Quaderns de Comunicació i Cultura*, 17, 30.

⁸² Wallace Safi, 'An Approach to News Discourse', (2018) 10, *Political Communication*, 55, 75.

⁸³ Isak Gagliardone, Davies Gal, Tobinson Alves, & Gary Martinez, *Countering Online Hate Speech*. (Paris: UNESCO, 2015).

⁸⁴ Dennis Allcott & Joe Gentzkow, "Governance and Democratic Procedures in the Information Society. (2017) 3(3), *Era Journal of Social Sciences*, 123-126

⁸⁵ Armer Fog, The Supposed and the Real Role of Mass Media in Modern Democracy. (2004), *A Working Paper for J+L 2 Classification B 52*.

are most often very difficult to subdue within the public space. It is an axiom when stereotypes exist about groups of people, chaos and tensions become the order of the day between the people, particularly conflicting groups of people. This, in-turn, has propensity of leading to more fragile situation in the nearest future.

His outbursts against Muslims, Hausa-Fulani, and the President as well as specific members of the current APC administration qualify Femi Fani Kayode as a hate speech proponent. President Buhari is described by Kayode as a "son of perdition and tyrannical servant of Satan who did not emanate from a righteous lineage or noble stock but is a wicked, unforgiving sadistic, bloodthirsty, and vengeful Amalekite" in his article *The Deteriorating Mind of Femi Adesina*⁸⁶. Another essay by Kayode, *The APC Cult of Death*⁸⁷, defames Nigeria's Minister of Information, Lai Mohammed, calling him a lying, big-nosed, diaper-wearing APC minister who pulls out the worst in him. Additionally, he claims that the APC governing party is guilty of heresy and blasphemy for elevating its ill leader to the status of god and for deifying themselves, saying that "APC stinks like rotten Chinese fish and a Calcutta brothel all wrapped into one." An ex-Niger Delta insurgent named Asari Dokubo also questions the validity of giving Northern Nigeria the president by using sarcastic language. So we must endure another 50 years of servitude to those we are superior to? Who are the nations that the UN, other international organizations, and people claim to be the least educated, have the worst infant mortality rates, etc.? Are these real people?⁸⁸

Similar to this, the Northern Christian Elders Forum (NCEF) stoked tensions by alleging bias in the selection of the country's security chiefs and claiming that "Nigeria is in the throes of war over President Buhari's attempt to impose Sharia" in response to the alleged removal of religious curricula from lower levels of education⁸⁹. The differences in opinion among Nigerians on the topics of marginalization and restructuring are another sensitive issue that is related to hate speech. While some believe

⁸⁶ Daily Trust. 2017. 10 Nigerian Leaders, 10 Different Ideas About Restructuring. Retrieved from saharareporters.com/2017/07/09/10-nigerian-leaders-10-ideas-about-restructuring.

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ Ibid

the country has to be reorganized economically and politically, others believe it was a waste of time and money that would only make the already unstable situation in the nation worse. Muhammad⁹⁰ diagnoses Biafran irredentism as being on the verge of "marginalization," not having an Igbo president, not having enough federal posts, and having five states in the southeast compared to seven in the north west (even while the north west geopolitical zone is several times bigger in landmass and population).

Nigerian state is convoluted and multi-faceted with both powerful and vulnerable groups. The latter groups are more susceptible to the manipulation. They are, sometimes, managing in such a very complex world⁹¹. The assumed powerful groups perceive other minor groups as subordinates. They view their rights as sub-preference, thus the source of conflict. Of course, freedom of expression is observable in an ideal society. However, people could choose to live with what they want as ideal, but world tends not much to be more simplistic than the ideal. This is why studies on dangerous speeches and its prevention submitted elements of counteracting as a means. Paul⁹², William⁹³ and Agbese⁹⁴ contended that an inflammatory speech steadily speaks volume before incursion of mass violence. This suggests that it is a forerunner or even a requisite factor for the outbreak of violence. While William⁹⁵ identified this position with historical supports for this claim; which include – “when Jews were called rats and vermin by Nazis before the Holocaust; and Tutsi people were called cockroaches by the Hutu before the horrendous 1994 Rwanda genocide”⁹⁶.

⁹⁰ Daily Trust, 2017: 53

⁹¹ Andrew Hopko, “Can artificial intelligence recognize hate speech? Cal-Berkeley researchers think so”. Cronkite (2018) News, 9 August [Online]

⁹² Samuel Paul *Explorations in Communication and History*. (Barbiezelizer: Routledge Press, 2008).

⁹³ GM William, ‘Priming and Media Impact on the Evaluations of the President’s Performance’, (2012). 24, *Communication Research*, 3-30.

⁹⁴ Daniel Agbese, The dangers of fake news. Daily Trust. Retrieved January 25, 2019 from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/the-dangers-of-fake-news.html>

⁹⁵ GM William, ‘Priming and Media Impact on the Evaluations of the President’s Performance’, (2012). 24, *Communication Research*, 3-30.

⁹⁶ Ibid, p 25

In Nigeria today, there is an upsurge in the number of messages and statements that symbolize fake news and hate speeches in Nigeria⁹⁷. Interestingly, the social media platforms have amplified its widespread across the nook and cranny of the nation-state. Although in the past, these repulsive trends have been permeated to the broadcast and print media. Moreover, the polarized nature of Nigerian state makes the hate speeches to generate provoking reactions. This underlines a propensity for a sharply divided society⁹⁸. A good reference point was the political atmosphere of the Second Republic 1979 - 1983 which was highly and significantly stimulated owing to the hate speeches hauling at each other political opponents, thus polarizing the ethnic configuration within the nation-state⁹⁹. Notably, the contents of hate statement were freely and widely published in numerous newspapers; so also were the electronic media orchestrating division among many families, and students in the respective higher educational institutions as well as the market women.

Observably before the 2015 general elections, there was little or no strong consideration on hate speech and fake news as a nation-wide challenge in Nigeria. Although, as the general elections were fast approaching, trends of hatred content of campaign messages became very alarming as it got to unprecedented levels¹⁰⁰. Notably, the electioneering campaigns propagated the hate speech by using foul languages against each opposing political contenders on prominent broadcast stations and some daily newspapers. Also, despite the provisions of advertising code and professional etiquettes, injurious write-ups, debilitating jingles, and documentaries were publicized against the rivalry opposition presidential candidate¹⁰¹. Other social problems and ethnic prejudices evidently compounded the tenacity of the problem. Agbese¹⁰² examined

⁹⁷ Aniye Ehikioya, "Presidency laments hate speeches by media houses". (2018). The Nation Newspaper, 2 February [Online].

⁹⁸ GM William, 'Priming and Media Impact on the Evaluations of the President's Performance', (2012). 24, *Communication Research*, 3-30.

⁹⁹ Daisy Yola, 'Hate Speech in Nigeria: Opportunity in Crisis', (2017) 4(2): *International Journal of Crime, Law and Social Issues*. 28, 35; Moses Oloja, "Whose hate speech threatens national unity?". The Guardian, (2018) 22 July [Online]

¹⁰⁰ Oloja, Ibid

¹⁰¹ Lawan Abu, *Creating Fear: News and the Construction of Crisis*. (Aidine de Gruyten, New York, 2017).

¹⁰² Daniel Agbese, The dangers of fake news. Daily Trust. Retrieved January 25, 2019 from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/the-dangers-of-fake-news.html>

the potentiality of hate speeches at upsurging the ethnic and religious crisis. It was found out the elements, such as bad jokes or benign insults are compelling. It becomes worrisome because it hampers healthy relationship expected of constituent ethnic groups in the country. After all, ethnic profiling should be the central concern for every ethnic group, rather than using unflattering nick names for other ethnic groups.

In real sense, hate speech is a major tension across the country. This is in spite of internecine disputes and disagreement among conflicting groups¹⁰³. Against this disorder, the constituted authorities should mandate the management of public order with a view to discouraging the vendors of hate speech. All the sectional leaders are guilty of this social menace. For instance, Nnamdi Kanu, leader of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), is most often alleged as a kingpin of those who make hate speech against the personality of the President and the existent of Nigeria nation states at large. He often hurled disintegrating statements at the government in Nigeria; all in a bid to secure Biafra nation¹⁰⁴. The Arewa Youth Forum among other groups in the Northern part of the country are also fond of making the contents of hate speech and statement; and similar trends could be observed by Militants in the Niger-Delta region of the country¹⁰⁵.

From all indications, hate speech has become a notable social act among individuals, groups and organization¹⁰⁶. It was although limited in its influence in the past, with restrictions to public spaces, such as beer parlours, buses, universities, etc. But the advent of social media technologies broke the jinx of its limited influence. Johnson¹⁰⁷ noted that hate speech gets spread like wind in this social media era. When a hate speech is made, at the point, the extent of its coverage remains undefined; but with the social media, once you have a phone, whatever you say can

¹⁰³ Zacheus Okino, "Making Sense of the Threats of Secession." Premium Times. Retrieved from newsdiaryonline.com/making-sense-threats-secession-zainab-suleiman-okino/. (Press Council, 2014).

¹⁰⁴ Anderson Kurfi, *Whither Nigeria: Unitarism, Federalism, Confederalism or Separatism*, (Kaduna: Network for Justice, 2014).

¹⁰⁵ MJ Henry, "The Media's Role in Forming Voter's National Economic Evolutions", (2007) 40, *American Journal of Political Science*, 372-395

¹⁰⁶ Peter Dickson, A Divided Nigeria, Ethnicity and Power. Retrieved from saharareporters.com/2011/08/25/divided-nigeria-ethnicity-and-power, 2011.

¹⁰⁷ Elbis Johnson, *The Public and its Problems*. (Athens: Idem, 2015).

be read across the globe. It therefore becomes important to create awareness on the socio-economic, political, and ethno-cultural rights of both individuals and groups, without excluding civic responsibilities and their multi-dimensional implications within the framework of press freedom¹⁰⁸. Also, it becomes imperative for journalists to be equipped with skills and knowledge for quick and effective identification of hate speech, as well as the modalities for counteracting them. There is however the need for better understanding of related contents to the policies and practices of hate speech¹⁰⁹. This should be made open and transparent in terms of participation by civil society organizations, academics among other relevant stakeholders. Meanwhile, there is need for the creation of independent and self-regulation mechanisms; as well as ethics development for social media platforms. Finally, it therefore becomes imperative for strict adherence to the provisions of the guiding codes in order to reduce to the barest minimum the alarming rates of hate speech and fake news.

4.1 Fake News and its Influx on Citizens Confusion and Apathy

In general terms, fake news connotes any form of hoaxes and misinformation circulated or published on social media platforms and websites for specific purposes. However, satire and ‘spoof’ stories appear somewhat difficult to differentiate from and what is missed up as fake news. The influx of fake news always aims at ridiculing and undermining the tenets of individuals, groups or organizations. It is most often being used in political arena by the main contenders. It sets out maliciously to undermine public confidence¹¹⁰. Satire is a cankerworm with tenacity of destroying the democratic fabrics of Nigerian State¹¹¹.

¹⁰⁸ IL Alemika, *Bias through Selection and Omission*. In Cohen S. Young J (eds) *The Manufacture of News*. (Beverly Hills: Sage, 2005).

¹⁰⁹ Ike Fayomi-Awodele, Kazeem Lamidi, & Olaleke Alao, ‘Inter-Governmental Conflict Relations in the Nigerian Fourth Republic’, (2019) 2(2), *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 253 – 259.

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Mice Nelson & Antel Taneja, *News Influence on Our Pictures of the World*. In: Bryant J. Zillmann D (eds) *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, (2nd edition. Lawrence, 2018).

Apuke and Omar¹¹² investigated the causes of the dissemination of false information during the COVID-19 pandemic epidemic in Nigeria. The researchers discovered that the main element that signaled the dissemination of false information on COVID-19 was altruism. The study's further findings show that users of social media shared material online because they wanted to alert those who could be unaware of specific health facts that could endanger their health. However, these individuals do not bother to confirm the accuracy of material before sharing it online, which is why false news was prevalent in Nigeria during the epidemic.

In a study published in 2019, Wasserman and Madris-Morales¹¹³ looked at how false news affects political elections in several African countries. Nearly 1,900 highly educated urbanites and members of the middle class from Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa were surveyed by the researchers. According to the survey, 76 percent of South Africans, 90 percent of Kenyans, and 93 percent of Nigerians believe they are exposed to fake news concerning their country's politics on a daily basis. Because majority of the material on social media platforms contains fake news, the researchers found that respondents to the survey do not believe it. The report advised that steps be made by the government to educate people on how to manage how they use their social media devices, even if it acknowledged the ability of new media technology to spread information quickly.

In a research to determine how fake news affects society in the age of social media, Ngwainmbi¹¹⁴ discovered that while there are many advantages to technical growth in new media, it also has drawbacks, one of which is the disseminating of incorrect and inaccurate information. The study by Ngwainmbi¹¹⁵ also looked at the effects of false news on international nation-building between industrialized and developing

¹¹² ODI Apuke & Bilal Omar, 'Fake news and COVID-19: Modelling the predictors of fake news sharing among social media users', (2020) *Telematics and Informatics*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2020.101475>

¹¹³ Wasserman and Madris-Morales, *Modern Politics and Government*, (Athens, Papazisis Publication, 2001).

¹¹⁴ EI Ngwainmbi, 'Why follow all the hoopla? Fake news reporting on social media platforms and implications for nation-state building', (2018) 4 (2), *International Journal of Media, Journalism and Mass Communications*, 29, 43

¹¹⁵ Ibid

nations. His research demonstrates that while consumers' easy access to portable devices makes false news sharing more prevalent in industrialized countries, individuals in poor countries disseminate news information on a vast scale in part because they lack the means to separate fake news from true news. The study contends that despite the excitement it offers, users of social media sites in both regions of the world may be less motivated to try to identify fake news information. According to the study, social media sharing of false news stories can have a substantial impact on nation-building, particularly on the socioeconomic development of nations.

Banerjee and Haque¹¹⁶ looked at how false news spreads in India and how politicians use it to advance their own self-serving agendas there. Their research showed that Indian politicians have used the fake news threat to foment hate speech and false information throughout the nation. For instance, a video of a sizable throng of supporters cheering Pakistan's victory in a cricket match in India went viral in 2018. The statement implied that Indian Muslims were betraying their country by siding with their worst enemies. The folks in the film were actually from Pakistan, where the video was actually shot. The video gained views after being shared several times on Facebook and Youtube, spreading the myth that Indian Muslims are anti-national. This event caused some localized problems in India.

In his study, Yaraghi¹¹⁷ identifies disinformation on social media as a negative element of our society that undermines confidence and causes the globe to be less informed. According to the study, web-based businesses fail to verify facts before publishing content on their websites, but in response to the growing prevalence of false information, they have developed a set of automated and manual processes for promoting, editing, and filtering published content. These procedures have replaced traditional sources of information for a large majority of users.

The aggravating problem with misinformation is basically the influx of fake news online. It has currently prompted the need to strengthening

¹¹⁶ Amby Banerjee & MA Haque, 'Is fake news real in India?' (2018), (8)4, *Journal of Content, Community & Communication Amity School of Communication*, 46-49.

¹¹⁷ BBC News Nigeria elections 2019: The spread of false information. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/amp/world-africa-47226397>

institutions to embark upon necessary actions across the globe¹¹⁸. Legislations should be initiated by the governments so as to engender the smooth implementation at the institutional level. All state and non-state actors must unilaterally come together and maintain a common front in fighting against the menace of fake news. Lopez¹¹⁹ noted that civil society organizations should also launch fact-checking initiatives to check this menace. However, it was maintained that technology companies stand to be blamed for the rising cases of fake news in the social media. To this effect, appropriate regulations must be strictly adhered by technology companies in censoring the sources, contents and contexts of the news.

The proliferation and wide-spread of fake news are mainly motivated by financial and ideological gains. However, combating initiatives of fake news are expected to be made stronger with propensities of overwhelming the vested interests of the actors whose aims are basically at finding more technical ways of spreading fake news and among other forms of misinformation¹²⁰. More interrogations have focused on unraveling the factors that make individuals to believe or get prone to the fake news. The deceptive factors are understudied and exploited by the mongers of fake news¹²¹. However, these intrigues have been gradually limited the expositions of population to fake news, especially in the United States of America¹²².

In India, Frayer & Safi¹²³ however cautioned that spreading of fake news on the messaging App for acclaiming lynching and murder of people. In some cases, the messaging App has been used to mislead and accuse wrongfully some innocent individuals in a case of kidnapping. In a small

¹¹⁸ Ibid

¹¹⁹ Lopez, *The Health Robbers: A Close Look at Quackery in America*. (Prometheus: Buffalo, 2016)

¹²⁰ Samuel Paul *Explorations in Communication and History*. (Barbiezelizer: Routledge Press, 2008).

¹²¹ Dennis Allcott & Joe Gentzkow, "Governance and Democratic Procedures in the Information Society. (2017) 3(3), *Era Journal of Social Sciences*, 123-126; Mice Nelson & Antel Taneja, *News Influence on Our Pictures of the World*. In: Bryant J. Zillmann D (eds) *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, (2nd edition. Lawrence, 2018).

¹²² Ibid

¹²³ Frayer & Safi, *Processing the News: How People tame the Information Tide*. (Second edition. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2018).

town in Mexico, Martinez¹²⁴ related an instance of a 43-year-old man and his 21-year-old nephew who were burnt to death by a mob in response to a fake news/rumour which was spread via WhatsApp. The spread fake news misled the people to lynch and burn them as the accused child abductors disturbing the village. Such unfortunate cases have been largely orchestrated. Nonetheless, it becomes imperative for us to understand what makes people believe the false information. Drawing from the results of a study, Saliu¹²⁵ identified factors that make people to be more susceptible to acknowledging fake news. First, a series of national surveys and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) revealed the definition of fake news and their reactions to the contents of fake news. Second, there was experimental research designed to test the credibility and popularity tests on the individual perceptions on fake news. Third, a content analysis of fake news in different was conducted with a view to identifying patterns in terms of language and structure used by the mongers. To this end, the results present combinations of source, audience, and message factors that facilitate the propagation of fake news. Additionally, the term "fake news" is being used with increasing worry to describe the reports in the mainstream media. Fake news is increasingly being used to refer to reports in the mainstream media that later turn out to be based, underscoring a severe ideological bias. The substance of fake news frequently proves to be inaccurate¹²⁶. Without a doubt, fake news is a derogatory term used by certain people or groups to disparage any group of people, groups, or organizations that they disagree with.

More notably, there's a vast network of dubious 'news' sites across the social media platforms. Most fake contents are simple in design, and many appear to be replicated from the homogenous web templates. Egbewole¹²⁷ expressed that these fake news sites have constituted an ecosystem network of real-time propaganda. This includes viral hoax

¹²⁴ Martinez *Online Hate Misinformation*. (Paris: UNESCO, 2018)

¹²⁵ KO Saliu, 'Mass Media and the 1993 General Elections in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis', (2006) 2(1), *Ilorin Journal of Sociology*, 2, 5.

¹²⁶ Collins Wang, 'Fake News and Related Concepts: Definitions and Recent Research Development', (2020) 16(3): *Contemporary Management Research*, 16(3): 145-174. doi:10.7903/cmr.20677

¹²⁷ Wahab Egbewole, "Power, Control and Limitation of legislative over Public funds" *Paper presented to Osun State House of Assembly*. (Osogbo, 2001).

engines that can sharply shape mass public opinion through their reactions to the lingering socio-economic, ethno-cultural and political topics. This network is spurred up based on the demand to spread hate speeches and fake news, as well as a hyper-biased, and politically-motivated information. Entman¹²⁸ stressed that the salient point about these “micro-propaganda machines” is that it aims at influencing a network that can grab and tailor people’s emotions, reactions and opinions. It creates viral sharing around what should be serious or contemplative issues. Fake news has clearly the potentialities to undermine any form of public process at a national scale. This is not just its explicit objective; but also has the capacity to weaken or even destroy the State peace and security architecture. Moreover, it undermines policy discussions at all levels of public participation.

4.2 Resultant Effects of Misinformation on Economic Instability: Is Fake News Bad for The Economy

Fake news has taken over all spheres of societal life. However, conversations have largely been focusing on the social implications on politics among other concerns. It was argued that many have not attempted taking into account the impact fake news has on the components of wider economy. Of note, it is not only that the misleading constructs of fake news affect business, its environments as well as the consumer confidence in products and companies¹²⁹. It was further clarified that the notice of fake news in the pipelines implies there is an algorithms act on bad information¹³⁰. Meanwhile, people are, to a certain level, aware of vulnerability possibly caused by the algorithm acts; and geared towards addressing them with adversarial algorithms and disclamations using the same platforms for the publications of false information on the social media and other internet platforms.

In Nigeria, the problem of misinformation on social media has gotten so bad that it is now posing a threat to national security by escalating

¹²⁸ RM Entman, ‘Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm’, (1993) 43, *Journal of Communication*, 51-58

¹²⁹ GM William, ‘Priming and Media Impact on the Evaluations of the President’s Performance’, (2012). 24, *Communication Research*, 3-30.

¹³⁰ Wahab Egbewole, “Power, Control and Limitation of legislative over Public funds” *Paper presented to Osun State House of Assembly*. (Osogbo, 2001).

already-existing societal tensions and amplifying extremist viewpoints¹³¹. Unprecedented levels of misinformation are currently being spread throughout Nigeria, further escalating already-existing ethnic and religious conflicts that predate the internet. A video shows Hausa farmers applying pesticide to their beans before shipping them to the country's southeast surfaced on Facebook and WhatsApp in 2019¹³². This served to protect the vegetables from insects like weevils throughout the lengthy trip. The video's interpretations and voice-overs, however, have drawn on long-standing animosities between Hausa and Igbo ethnic group members, alleging that the farmers were actually scattering poison rather than pesticide¹³³. "The typical individual would accept this version of the tale and share it with others who are similarly inclined to believe and before you know it, there can be a confrontation between Hausa and Igbos".¹³⁴

Nigeria is one of the nations in Africa where the consequences of false news have spread. The difficulty is not exclusive to the nation's political system. When the All Progressive Congress (APC), the then opposition party that is now in power, was suspected of using false information to gain support and win the 2015 general elections, the concerns had a new significance. That ushered in a new age for "false news" in Nigeria¹³⁵. Political power players are suddenly aware of the new media's potential¹³⁶. Political parties and leaders in Nigeria now have specific rooms where they employ individuals to serve as attack dogs¹³⁷. This

¹³¹ Kola Adebajo, How Nigeria army is weaponizing "fake news" to discredit journalists. Premium Times. Retrieved from <https://humangle.ng/how-nigeria-army-isweaponising-fake-news-to-discredit-journalists/> AFP (2019, April 14).

¹³² Xin Zhang & AA Ghorbani, 'An overview of online fake news: characterization, detection, and discussion', (2019) 57(2), *Information Processing Management*, 20, 25

¹³³ Mhadi Aldwairi & Adar Alwahedi, 'Detecting fake news in social media networks', (2018) 141 *Proc. Comput. Sci.* 215, 222

¹³⁴ Imran Hassan & Jim Hitchen, Nigeria's disinformation landscape. Retrieved from <https://items.ssrc.org/disinformation-democracy-and-conflict-prevention/nigerias-disinformationlandscape/> (2020).

¹³⁵ HO Ogaraku, (2020). Social media and political communication: Use of Facebook by two Nigerian political parties (APC and PDP) in the 2015 general election. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338596026>

¹³⁶ Solomon Owkins (2018). How fake news spread. Retrieved September 16, 2020 from <https://www.glotoglobe.com/how-fake-news-spread/>

¹³⁷ BBC News, Nigeria elections 2019: The spread of false information. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/amp/world-africa-47226397>

practice is problematic since it promotes the spread of false information. Politicians in Nigeria use social media influencers as well. It turns out that most people who believe in the effect that new media has on society would do whatever it takes to recruit social media influencers to "mis-inform" and "dis-inform" the public when doing so will benefit them. It is known that certain Nigerians' political choices between 2015 and 2019 were affected by the use of false news as a tactic¹³⁸.

This section reviewed the work of Inobemhe, et. al.¹³⁹ where it was noted that When a story is uploaded by one of these recognizable handles or pages on Facebook or Twitter, the same news gets shared or copied on roughly three or four other pages, which is how the reach keeps growing¹⁴⁰. And a risky tendency has emerged from this growth across new media channels. One of these instances is the photographs of killings that are popular on Facebook from a certain region of Nigeria. Even while there may be murders taking place elsewhere, a short fact check indicates that most of the images spreading on new media platforms were taken in the past and have been updated using new media technology.

For instance, the PDP claimed that the APC campaign organization circulated misleading information about Atiku Abubakar during a PDP event in Sokoto State. With the caption "Keep them in poverty, then give them handouts - Atiku in Sokoto yesterday," President Buhari's adviser Lauretta Onochie shared a picture of boxes covered with Nigerian dollar notes in the northern state of Sokoto. The Buhari campaign group rejected responsibility for disseminating the bogus information. However, when reality checks looked into the information, they found

¹³⁸ KO Irenoa, Use of social media in the generation and diffusion of information during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, (2017) Retrieved from <https://eprints.rclis.org/32701>; Nil Cheeseman, WhatsApp played a big role in the Nigerian election. Not all of it was bad, (2019) Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/amp/whatsapp-played-a-big-role-in-the-nigerian-election-not-all-of-it-was-bad-121064>

¹³⁹ Inobemhe, K., Ugber, F., Ojo, I. & Santas, T. 'New Media and the Proliferation of Fake News in Nigeria', (2020) 2(2), *Nasarawa Journal of Multimedia and Communication Studies*, 155-168

¹⁴⁰ Salim Busari, How fake news was weaponized in Nigeria's election.CNN.com. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/cnn/2019/02/15/africa/fake-news-nigeria-intl/index>.

that the picture was two years old and had been shot at a Kokun Foundation event that promotes hunger awareness¹⁴¹. Atiku Abubakar is charged in another widely circulated video with brokering a deal with Boko Haram in exchange for land and oil. The brief video was published from the Facebook page "Make Nigeria Worse Again," which has received over 200,000 views. However, it is silent on where or when the Atiku campaign was expected to make the announcement. The Atiku campaign staff informed BBC Reality Check that the transaction didn't actually exist but was instead a pranksters' scheme to damage Atiku Abubakar's reputation¹⁴².

In order to plant the seeds of ethnic emotion among Nigerians, certain religious organisations are involved in the dissemination of false information about other religions. People advocate for ethnic problems using new media technologies¹⁴³. Looking back at the atrocities in Rwanda is unsettling. Even at an era when social media was not widely used in Africa, the state's suppression of conventional media continued to feed an ethnic war that shook the very foundations of Rwanda and other African nations. This suggests that there are significant ethnic and religious divisions among Nigerians, and that these divisions have an impact on how we interact with one another in public. The Nigerian population's religiosity is more concerning. Some of them have allowed religious messages to influence their thinking to the point where they have killed due to a particular belief. With the development of new media, it has gotten worse. For instance, a Facebook message published in Port Harcourt might instantly spark unrest in Kano.

On social media recently, a video went viral alleging that Fulani herders were murdering people on the Benin-Ore route with machetes. A short fact-check established that it was untrue¹⁴⁴. However, tensions in and

¹⁴¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/worldafrica>, 2019

¹⁴² Ibid

¹⁴³ Bayo Onanuga, "Roots of hate speech, Remedies". Paper presented at the Workshop on Hate Communication in Nigeria: Identifying Its Roots and Remedies, 22 February. (Abuja: Nigerian Press Council, 2018)

¹⁴⁴ Akin Olabode, (2020, Feb. 25) Fake news alert: Herdsmen are not killing people on Benin-Ore road. Citizen News. Retrieved from <https://www.citizennewsng.com/2020/01/fake-news-alertherdsmen-are-not-killing-people-on-benin-ore-road/>; Ade Olatunji, (2020, Feb. 24). Fake news alert: Herdsmen are not killing people on Benin-Ore Road. The

around the Hausa/Fulani-dominated regions of Northern Nigeria were high before anybody realized it. It needed media organizations like FRCN and NTA to dispel rumors and calm emotions with paid advertisements. For instance, in July 2018, the Nigerian WhatsApp group Christian Arise Network shared a photo of a woman training with an AK-47 rifle while wearing traditional Muslim attire, along with the caption, "Fulanis teaching their wives how to handle a gun but we are busy calling on the UN to come and help us." The topic of the article was pastoralists, an issue that has plagued northern Nigeria since the 1990s. However, it was found that the image was a fake. The image came from a YouTube video that was posted. The persons in the image did not speak Fulfulde or Hausa, the two languages cited by the accused in the post. They didn't sound Nigerian, instead sounding like native Arabic speakers. In actuality, the woman is Sudanese, according to the description that goes with the video. Along with harmful exaggerations or distortions of actual tales, which are more challenging to identify, there are downright fraudulent reports like this one¹⁴⁵.

However, the media remains the only element for retooling the rise and fall of societal values in this modern era¹⁴⁶. For example, the development of cryptocurrencies brought about the explosion of numerous online contents: on the one hand, the online contents are meant for the criticism of other popular currencies; on the other hand, the contents have been used to deliberately spread fake news affecting the share prices of their holdings¹⁴⁷. Johnson¹⁴⁸ further exemplified using a prime insight into the pump and dump scheme organized by a chat room called '*Big Pump Signal*'. It was developed to promote through a bogus John McAfee

Cable. Retrieved from <https://www.thecable.ng/fake-news-alert-herdsmen-are-notkilling-people-on-benin-ore-road>

¹⁴⁵ NI Egbunike, Social media propelled ethnocentric disinformation and propaganda during the Nigerian elections, (2018) Retrieved from <https://globalvoices.org/2019/11/06/social-mediapropelled-ethnocentric-disinformation-and-propaganda-during-the-nigerian-elections/>.

¹⁴⁶ Xhang Chen, S.-C.J Sin, Lee Theng, Chen Lee, 'Why students share misinformation on social media: motivation, gender, and study-level differences', (2015) 41(5), J. Acad. Librariansh. 583, 592

¹⁴⁷ Gilbert Gravanis, Akham Vakali, Kirsh Diamantaras, Pier Karadais, 'Behind the cues: a benchmarking study for fake news detection', (2019) 128, *Expert System Appliance*, 201, 213

¹⁴⁸ Elbis Johnson, *The Public and its Problems*. (Athens: Idem, 2015).

twitter account. It was explained that “after sending out a tweet from the account declaring that GVT was the coin of the day, the value of coin increased by \$15 in four minutes, with trading volume doubling.” The chat group conspired and communicated the appropriate times to purchase and dispose off the coin. It also provided a fake hint as to when the value would be returned to its original cost. The ability of the chat group makes the uneducated and overeager traders more vulnerable; to conspire and spread mischievous information on private chats; and at risk of falling into their trap.

It has also been experienced an increase of traditional fake news which force political space into disarray, disengage social connectivities, and urge the collapse of financial markets. This is mainly executed by creating mainstream media platforms for the promotion of fake news and false information¹⁴⁹. This approach, according to Colliander ¹⁵⁰, led to the emergence of a website that appeared as CNNrun the story ‘*Richard Branson and Elon Musk Invested \$17million in a Bitcoin Tech Startup*’. This simple fake information led to hundreds of thousand websites. Nevertheless, it should be noted that there are single metric tools available which attempts to evaluate the credibility of stories and track the possible effects or the implications of the story on targeted audience either in the print or electronic media. Moreover, concerted efforts are on-going in building tools to tackle the impact of fake news on all components of societal life¹⁵¹. Fake news and hate speeches are similitude of an epidemic. It is therefore become important that individuals verify the source of their news before reading or making any large capitalization; and adopt the platforms to make sounding decisions whether or not to rely on the shared information. In addition, this paper has discussed how fake news can influence political and social spheres. Though, politics and social aspects of life appear not to be the main targets of fabricated stories. Generally, the global economy has experienced the impact of rumors and misinformation. Going by its ways in controlling financial markets, there is heavy reliance on the stock

¹⁴⁹ John Colliander, ‘This is fake news’: Investigating the role of conformity to other users’ views when commenting on and spreading disinformation in social media. (2019) 97, *Comput. Hum. Behav.* 97, 202–215

¹⁵⁰ Ibid

¹⁵¹ Kazeem Lamidi & Ify Igbokwe, ‘Social Investment Programmes in Nigeria: Impact and Challenges’, (2021) 11(1), *African Journal of Social Work*, 1-11

market information on trading. It is vital to confirm that information available is trustworthy, reliable and true. Technically therefore, few stories appear to be disconnected, such that they can be underlined to be fake. But sometimes, they often hold some credible elements which might be sufficient to create some doubt or boggling in minds. This has an average propensity to either directly or indirectly influence the economy.

4.3 New Media and its Significance to Nation-Building as an Index of Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Media remains one of the most useful significances of human life. It is an axiom that no spectrum of human life subsists outside the media in this modern World. It has been overloaded with numerous letters, films, sounds and pixels, jingles, headlines. The term ‘media’, in this context, connotes mainly the print and electronic media¹⁵². Its dominant usage of technological channels, such as Facebook, Youtube, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, necessitates its modification as new media. Media influence our life in all ramifications. With an emerging growth of online media, e-platforms and an easy TV channel, this implies that at the disposal is a colossal array of prospective identity examples¹⁵³. In modern society, identity is constantly unstable. It must be carefully created and selected with reference to preventable media traditions¹⁵⁴. Available sources are numerous for the people to get access to information from both print and electronic media such as Radio, TV, Internet, or even Cell phones. As a result, the media maintains an immense capacity to address numerous social issues for the populace¹⁵⁵. Often, new media do not objectively set the genuine agenda; and resolve the prospective and consequences of the subject matter. To this end, it consistently causes negative consequences towards the general public as well as the formation of moral panics. This can sometimes manifest to mob violence¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵² Daisi Yola, ‘Hate Speech in Nigeria: Opportunity in Crisis’, (2017) 4(2): *International Journal of Crime, Law and Social Issues*. 28, 35

¹⁵³ Ibid

¹⁵⁴ Andrew Hopko, “Can artificial intelligence recognize hate speech? Cal-Berkeley researchers think so”. Cronkite (2018) News, 9 August [Online]

¹⁵⁵ James Waldron, *The harm in hate speech*. (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2012);

¹⁵⁶ Ibid

Mainly, the task of new media sounds easy. But outstandingly, it is not simple at all. Information defines a strike balancing content between subjectivity and objectivity¹⁵⁷. On the one hand, new media have capacity to convey important events, happenings; and keep the information as objective as possible. On the other hand, new media should also form a platform for individuals, groups and organizations. It should guide and criticize not only particular segments but also the society at large¹⁵⁸. Concerning this critical function, it is essential to have a good number of both vertical and horizontal media among other different information providers. Furthermore, it is necessary to emphasize the positive and negative effects of new media houses¹⁵⁹. Of advantage is the support of the media houses for advertisement rise and quick delivery of news across all sectors of economy. This commands more capitalization from markets and business ventures. On the contrary, a major disadvantage lies on the danger of delivering stereotypes, unverified information or news for capital or economic purposes¹⁶⁰. Besides, the main difference between the public and private media establishments is that the former does not really enjoy freedom in broadcasting, and creates a regulatory means of engaging the public with some media supports for the government of the day. However, the two types of the media house are needed; first, because the public media should not be superficial; and second, the private ones will provide a congenial room for effective and healthy competition in the space of mass media.

Furthermore, this gap develops a kind of disintegration among individuals in theological, scientific and metaphysical stage of reasoning. Sometimes, one can possibly compare this missing gap with reference point to the gap of poverty. It is clear that new media owns a bigger effect on daily life by setting trends and broadcasting to influence the manner of thought on the socio-economic, cultural and political issues¹⁶¹. The

¹⁵⁷ Moses Oloja, "Whose hate speech threatens national unity?". *The Guardian*, (2018) 22 July [Online]

¹⁵⁸ Zacheus Okino, "Making Sense of the Threats of Secession." *Premium Times*. Retrieved from newdiaryonline.com/making-sense-threats-secession-zainab-suleiman-okino/. (Press Council, 2014).

¹⁵⁹ Ibid

¹⁶⁰ Ibid

¹⁶¹ Biola Ayansola, *Influence of Mass Media in the Nigerian Society*. (University of Ibadan, Ibadan Press, 2019); Collins Wang, 'Fake News and Related Concepts: Definitions and Recent Research Development', (2020) 16(3): *Contemporary Management Research*,

features of new media will be of great benefit and more positive than negative in nation-building with certain conditions to be put in place. The conditions include: wide diversity of media; no monopoly or oligopoly, strict adherence to media rules; social regulations and political education.

Specifically, there is the need for information dissemination in the society. Hence, the full range of contaminated media content becomes a major concern so as not to incite violence, hatred and internal rivalry among individuals, groups and organizations. Furthermore, this should be subjected to control due to the societal susceptibility to fake news, hate speeches and misinformation on the state of nationhood. Concerted efforts are consequentially needed to regulate access to internets by tracking parabola and satellite transmissions¹⁶². It is noteworthy that the media sector requires information revolution in terms of filtering and censoring uncountable number of unverified information.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This paper has given us an overview to the emergence of mass media, its effects directly and indirectly on Nigeria society and its economy as well as social and its political landscape. Also, during the course of this research it was noticed that, new media has contributed immensely both positively and negatively to the society and the Nigeria economy especially in the area of disseminating information to the people. Incumbently, negative use of new media has facilitated hate speech among the Nigerian media users which as a result, causes an injury to many Nigerians. It may be rightly said that, new media current state in Nigeria is an exposure of laziness and a platform for courtesy-less image. Therefore, this research has pointed out crux effects; significant, usefulness, of mass media on the Nigeria society.

16(3): 145-174. doi:10.7903/cmr.20677 & Haez Mylonas, Nation-building, (2020) <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199743292/obo-9780199743292-0217.xml>

¹⁶² Daisi Yola, 'Hate Speech in Nigeria: Opportunity in Crisis', (2017) 4(2): *International Journal of Crime, Law and Social Issues*. 28, 35; Haman Kanoh, 'Why do people believe in fake news over the Internet? An understanding from the perspective of existence of the habit of eating and drinking' (2018) 126, *Proc. Comput. Sci.* 1704, 1709

This paper recommends a strong policy for guiding new media at the national level in Nigeria. In context-specific, the policy should streamline the legal and institutional frameworks needed for the control of fake news, hate speech and misinformation across media coverages in Nigeria. New media has a significant influence on the individuals, groups and organisations. It serves as a means of gathering intelligence and elements of emotions as well as sentiments in the individual perspectives. Its complexities should bring about awareness and understanding of the world's ecosystems. The media industry has a wide range of expertise specializations. It provides a significant contribution to education in the above-mentioned area. It should be remembered that the press not only reports on occurrences, but also expresses their own opinions on them. As a result, the reader is given the chance to evaluate a problem from several perspectives. The study of history, geography, science, literature, and other subjects is aided by the online teaching platforms which are a component of new media. It provides more teaching information on these topics. The use of new media has a process which, to some extent, must be put into consideration in order to have effective media in place. New media must be properly organized, the organization of the media will enhance its usefulness at the appropriate time. Also, the selection of new media is one of the tools for ensuring effective use of media. Proper selection makes the usefulness meaningful and makes it available at the right time.